

NLG NEWSLETTER

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CHICAGO, CHICAGO..... AN ANA TOWN

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK...By David T. Alexander

IT'S ANA CONVENTION TIME AGAIN

Ruminations and Reminiscences

As the 1999 Chicago American Numismatic Association (ANA) convention draws near, I find myself thinking back over the many NLG-ANA events I have been privileged to attend since 1967.

I am actually celebrating two landmark anniversaries in 1999: 50 years as an active collector and 25 years in NLG. Dec. 23 is the anniversary of acquiring my first coin, a 1946 Colombia five centavos, from our new and apprehensive neighbor at the new family home on the northern marches of Miami, Florida. After all, a Pan American pilot would be away much of the time and with two new youngsters next door, who knew what they would do to his property! It was 1949 and the event is still etched in memory and the humble coin still is part of the family collection.

December 1974 found me ending my first year at *Coin World* in Sidney, Ohio, and my application for NLG membership was being expedited by Margo Russell and Virginia Culver. I did not attend an ANA convention or an NLG Bash until the stellar event in New York City in 1976. It was at that continent-sized show that I addressed my first NLG Symposium as well.

I have often said that numismatics is a "people thing," and the richest treasure we draw from our numismatic adventures is the fellowship, shared experiences and interaction with other collectors. Many of the most rewarding experiences are those on our busy convention schedules. The sharing of ideas at meetings, the talks and presentations we ourselves offer and joyful gatherings such as the NLG Bashes are among the most productive things we will do in our numismatic careers.

Looking back on the last 25 years, I realize that I have had a

wonderful opportunity to meet and work closely with many of the greats of ANA and NLG in my post-1974 journeying.

So many of the Guild's early leaders and boosters are no longer with us. My prized NLG lapel typewriter came to me directly from the lapel of the beloved Maurice M. Gould. Handling it brings to mind so many other names, including Gordon Z. Greene, Ray Byrne, Virginia Culver, James L. Betton III, Abe Kosoff, Col. Grover C. Criswell, Chuck O'Donnell, James G. Johnson, Clement F. Bailey, Virgil M. Hancock – and yes, Walter Breen.

The roster of still-active Guild members is too long to even begin, whether they be Board members or fellow writers. The esteemed Lee Martin, Ed Reiter, Jim Miller, Donn Pearlman in earlier times; Hoosier interlocutor Wendell Wolka and Bash composer-songster Chris Connell more recently have been shining lights.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Ed Reiter

SECOND CITY, HERE WE COME!

Chicago, like Avis, has taken perverse pride in being "Number 2" through the years – runnerup to New York among the most populous cities in the nation. It has worn "Second City" almost as a badge of special honor.

Recently, I'm told, Los Angeles has overtaken "Chi-town" on the census rolls (those kept by Uncle Sam, not by NGC). Nonetheless, I'm expecting a first-class reception – and first-rate show – when I arrive in Chicago for the 1999 edition of the American Numismatic Association convention.

NLG activities will, of course, play an important part in making this year's convention a memorable one for members and friends of the Guild. As this is written in mid-July, judging is already nearing completion in our 1999 Writers' Competition and plans are well under way for the fun-and-frolic portion of our Bash.

The Bash will take place at 9:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 12, in Room 13 of the Rosemont Convention Center. That's the same room where the World Series of Numismatics is being held, ensuring that we will have adequate space and the necessary equipment, including a microphone for our usual assortment of comedians, vocalists and award-presenters.

I'm delighted to report that Wendell Wolka will serve again as emcee, ably supported by his well-seasoned cast of shills. Wendell was forced to operate with a greatly depleted shill section last year, since some chose not to travel to Portland – but all should be on hand in Chicago, given its more central and convenient location.

Mike Fuljenz once more has given the Guild a generous contribution to cover the cost of the award plaques – and, as he did in 1998, an additional amount to provide real food to fortify Bash-goers for the evening's events. Those who attended the Portland Bash still speak in glowing terms of the hot roast beef and lavish cheese assortment furnished for their culinary pleasure – quite a contrast to the usual bowls of "trail mix."

Entries in this year's contest hit an all-time high, so those who emerge victorious will have the added satisfaction of having beaten out some formidable competition. I'd like to extend special thanks to Sal Germano, who set aside space in his Hawthorne, New Jersey, office suite to serve as the reception center for the many entries. Scott

Travers has been doing an outstanding job of coordinating this year's contest (as he has done every year for almost a decade now), with able assistance from Tom DeLorey and the panel of judges. We expect to have the handsome plaques ready and waiting for winners to receive them at the Bash.

The identity of the 1999 Clemy Award winner also will be announced at the Bash – and this year's recipient will be of special interest because, for the

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first time ever, he or she is being selected by a vote of all previous Clemy honorees. The Board chose to use this procedure following the death of the 1998 winner, Burnett Anderson. Normally, the recipient is chosen by the last previous winner from a group of candidates nominated by members of the Board.

One traditional NLG event will not take place in Chicago. We have decided not to hold our annual Thursday morning symposium because of a scheduling conflict. A widely anticipated forum has been scheduled during the same time slot, and a number of NLG officers and members are obligated to attend that competing program. We regret this development, but we were unable to arrange for a suitable alternative time and place.

Those of you seeking tickets to the Bash can obtain them on the bourse floor from our treasurer, Kay Lenker, or myself. The Guild will not have a table on the floor, but Kay will be readily available and I expect to be at the *COINage* booth much of the time. Tickets can be obtained at that booth even if I am not there.

All roads lead to Chicago, and I hope you've already circled Thursday, Aug. 12, on your convention calendar – along with the notation "NLG Bash."

We promise you a program second to none!

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A CALL TO ACTION

By Mark Benvenuto

I've only been an NLG member for a couple of years, so perhaps I should keep my mouth shut and leave well enough alone. However, I've never been hobbled by common sense in the past, and see no reason to start now. I want to issue a call to action to each and every NLG member, be they one of the big, famous poohbahs, with several books to their names, or someone who occasionally writes for club newsletters. Here's the call: Let's talk up these 50-state quarters to the general public! Now and for the next few years!

Yes, yes, I hear you out there, reading this, saying to yourself, "Sure, Mark, I'm doing that already. What's your point?" The point, my dear colleagues, aside from the one I wear my hat on, is that though there have been mountains of press on the new quarter designs, and the new dollar coin as well, the general public still sees only molehills of it. That's because we do a great deal of this writing about these subjects in the numismatic press, which most of the public does not see.

So, here's the game plan. Look to your local newspapers, regional magazines, TV stations, radio stations, and just about anywhere else you can think of, and fire them off a query letter. Ask if you can get a brief article about the quarters in their publication. Ask if you can run something about the new dollar coin. Let them know they could use you as a source if they want their own writers to do the

work. Sure, this shotgun approach guarantees you'll get a lot of rejections. We all will. But we can take it because we're writers. As a matter of fact, if you don't get a pile of rejection form letters for your very own, you either aren't trying hard enough, or are a much better wordsmith than I am (you lucky b*st*rd, you!). But don't let the rejects get you down. Eventually a few "yes" letters will creep back to you.

Also, don't slack off because the commemorative quarter program has already been going on for a few months. Trust me, the public at large does not know what these quarters are, or what the themes are. Besides, a lot of the new quarters will need a little explanation. They're not all going to be as easy to understand as the Georgia peach. If you live in Northern border states (like little old me in Michigan), you've probably heard enough "I thought these were Canadian" stories to make you want to howl like a sled dog. I'm also willing to bet most of us have heard a "Paul Revere" story or two about the Delaware quarters. If you haven't heard one of the well informed citizens of our technologically advanced, well educated nation say, "Damn, ah thawt that was Paul Ruvere," you're far luckier than I and the unwashed masses I hang around with.

Spreading the word about the new quarters is our first major challenge. Spreading the word about the Sacagawea dollar is the second and probably larger challenge. Think about this and

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be honest with yourself. When you first heard of the new dollar possibility, did you even know how to pronounce "Sacagawea"? Did you have any idea of who she was? Or did you think this was maybe a new salad dressing? Of course you hadn't heard of her! Anyone who has is either a history professor or a person aching for an audition for the game show "Jeopardy!". Or perhaps an actual Shoshone, I suppose. The point here is that the public most likely has no idea about who Sacagawea was, or why she is being put on a new dollar coin. Someone needs to educate them on the issue, even if it seems no one will listen. As John Belushi says in *Animal House*, "We're just the guys to do it!"

So, let's keep in mind, folks that there are two issues here on which our Guild should be poised to take the lead at a national level. I don't suppose this happens a lot, but it's happening to us now. After all, I would be willing to wager a gold-plated 1913 "V" nickel that most Guild members are also members of either the ANA, the ANS, or both. Each of those organizations has a healthy education component running through it. Let's get out there and educate the public! And if you get the chance to, make some money doing it (if you make more than me, you buy the first round of drinks at the next NLG Bash).

#

REMEMBRANCES OF A FIRST-TIME BASH-GOER

By Carl C. Honore

I had been looking forward to the Portland ANA convention for four years. To understand what that means, you need to know that I live in a little town in Washington about the size of a postage stamp, on the Olympic Peninsula.

Not much happens here numismatically, and I knew that I would not be able to attend a convention unless it was in my back yard. All of you in the Guild seem to live either in Seattle or a thousand miles east of my hometown of Sequim. I couldn't spend time at the ANA convention, so I spent my money on long-distance phone bills until I could meet all of you in one place at the same time. After all those bills, I found that I probably could have saved a lot of that money if I had just made it to Detroit, New York or wherever.

That being said, I immediately started preparing for the convention. I knew that the Bash would be a highlight of my first ANA experience. I had three days to cram in an art exhibit, present a Numismatic Theatre talk and attend ... the Bash.

On Thursday, I arrived at the Bash with Dr. Richard Doty, my NLG sponsor. I was not sure what to expect, only that it would include a number of prominent numismatic authors, members of a group who take themselves not too seriously but with several grains of salt and with much good humor.

I was seated with Dr. Doty to my right and noted author and expert on Israeli coins Simcha Kuritzky on my left. Looking around, I saw Bob Julian, Scott Travers, Ed Reiter and other heroes whose work I was acquainted with but whom I had never met. Then the fun began.

I somehow knew that part of the humor would deal with the recent goings-on at ANA, and I was not disappointed. President Anthony Swiatek took it all in stride, and I laughed myself silly at most of the jokes. The parody songs were not too bad, either.

I thought the "Strumstick" accompaniment was quite appropriate. Being a musician myself, I know what a job it is to get up there in front of everybody and hopefully pull something off. Well done! Besides, I had only seen this instrument advertised on QVC. I had never seen one up close and personal before. My musical education is now complete.

I also found out that some of my colleagues could sing on key, some couldn't – but no one was really listening anyway, so it didn't matter.

On to the awards, or the real reason everyone came to the Bash.

My friend Dr. Doty won a plaque for his opus on the history of American money. Kudos to Dr. Doty! The highlight of the awards had to be the presentation of the Clemy Award to one of my heroes, Burnett Anderson. A better recipient could not have been found. I always found time

to read Burnett's articles in *Numismatic News*. I had been looking forward to meeting him, but he was unable to be at the convention or the Bash. Sadly, he passed away a few months later. His contributions to journalism and the hobby will be sorely missed.

Some time after the convention, I learned that I would become the new editor of the *Seattle Coin Club Newsletter*. I hope I can be as successful as you all have been, and I will try to live up to the journalistic standards set by Burnett Anderson.

One of the reasons I joined the NLG is because I wanted to associate with and learn from those who share my passion for books, coins and writing. At the Portland Bash, I found that I had joined the right group!

#

FROM THE BOOK STACKS By David T. Alexander

Medallic Portraits of Washington By Russell Rulau and George Fuld, Second Edition in Consultation with Q. David Bowers. Iola, Wisconsin, Krause Publications, 1999. Hard-cover, 322 pages, profusely illustrated.

The appearance of the Centennial Edition of this work in 1985 was a landmark in American medallic research. That book was a definitive revision of William S. Baker's original work of 1885, which had undergone a partial revision in 1965 by George Fuld.

"Baker" has remained the definitive reference in the vast field of Washington medals, the most important, sought-after

and costly category of American numismatic collectibles in the mid-19th century. Baker numbers and the Rulau-Fuld extension of them remain the basic reference citation to this series.

The new edition represents a considerable expansion on the 1985 revision, compiled with the assistance of a number of active contributors. Pricing information has been expanded by plentiful auction records, provided by such firms as Stack's, Bowers & Merena Galleries, Presidential Coin and Antique (H. Joseph Levine) and others. Indeed, the wealth of auction realizations testifies to the very real revival of interest in Washington material in modern America.

Here a reviewer's note:
A traditional term for Washington collectibles often used is Washingtonia. Properly

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We thank the members of NLG whose articles have enriched COINage magazine since 1964.

We
Invite
Your
Submissions



speaking, Washingtonia is the genus of a majestic palm tree of the South and Pacific region. Washingtoniana is to be preferred for medals and tokens on linguistic, historic and grammatical grounds. Lincoln material, after all, is referred to as Lincolniana, not Lincolnia.

A major step forward for *Medallic Portraits of Washington* is the handsome hard cover, an innovation among Krause's vast stable of more than 600 book titles now in print. Internally, the photography and layout are typically Krause, although the connoisseur might sigh for a more snappy look than a purely commercial product can reasonably be expected to present.

In a work of this size, originally begun before the computer database revolution, there is some delay in getting the most up-to-date information into place. A single example might be the Washingtoniana treated over the last eight years in this reviewer's *Coin World* column, "The Research Desk." Much new information is expected to come from Q. David Bowers' handling of the great Schuster Collection of Washingtoniana, whose sale during 1999 is one of the real motivations for the new book's appearance this year.

Looking over the vast panorama of Washington coins, medals and tokens presented by Fuld and Rulau, the collector can only feel gratitude for the finished product in its new purple-red hard cover, overlooking the few faults until the appearance of a THIRD revised

edition, which is sure to appear to serve this continually expanding collecting area.

Medallic Portraits of Washington is available from Krause Publications, Book Department, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990-0001 at \$34.95 per copy plus \$3.25 for shipping. The volume is also widely available from leading coin dealers and booksellers across the country.

Reminiscences.....cont. from page 1

I may be excused for citing my staff colleagues, including Tom DeLorey, Fred L. Reed II, Courtney Coffing or the unforgettable Jay Guren. Jay fervently resisted NLG and all of its works until we created his special "NLG Gotcha" award at the last Cincinnati ANA.

NLG also gave me the opportunity to meet rivals and competitors, who at close range proved to be delightful folk, from Russ Rulau to Alan Herbert, Cliff Mishler and Chet Krause himself. Then, too, there was Arnold Jeffcoat, in a unique category by himself, and an occasional NLG foe such as Kurt Krueger, whose stillborn fantasy NEWS organization flashed across the horizon back in '79, not to mention some gadflies in the book collecting field of the very recent past.

I pass over in silence those elitists who scorn popular numismatics and who criticized the Guild policy of having contestants enter their own work in past years. These are the same

critics who were more than once invited to join a proposed panel to select the best from a given year's published works for the contest, but refused to put their hands to this chore, preferring to sit back, criticize and carp.

I have long been diverted by the repetitious cries of "There are too many NLG awards" from those who do not receive them, with the counterpoint "There are not enough NLG awards" from those who have received Guild recognition.

Again the name of the "Silver Fox," the late Abe Kosoff, comes to mind for his work in setting up the present award system for Virginia Culver in 1978, creating the general scheme which still governs the awards today.

I am proud to have had the opportunity to serve NLG as executive director, Board member or editor for more years than seem possible at this writing. Compiling the 25-year history of NLG a few years ago was certainly one of the more enjoyable and (I hope) lasting accomplishments.

Work on behalf of NLG has nearly always been rewarding, more than a few times frustrating but always productive of deep satisfaction to me. Receiving the Clemy in 1987 was an undoubted high point of my numismatic career.

Struggling with hotel staffs and convention managers in arranging Symposia and Bashes has always been challenging - including the 1987 Bash, at which I was emcee. That effort

was rewarded by a garrulous twit whose "ANA Diary" in another club's publication dismissed my rather exhausting efforts with "Went to NLG Bash. No Donn Pearlman. Rats." End of discussion. Ah well, they can't all be gems.

I'm sure many fellow NLG members have seen the hit movie "Shakespeare in Love" with the divine Gwyneth Paltrow. You will remember

the scene in which the impecunious producer tries to explain how the company's next play will somehow be a hit. The script is not yet even written; the actors' lines are not on paper, much less learned; vicious bill collectors are only barely fended off; and the High Chamberlain of England has not been dissuaded from closing the theater itself. "BUT," cries the producer, "It will work! You'll see, it always comes together."

IT'S A MYSTERY!!!! So will come together our 1999 NLG year and Bash, the contest and all the rest.

No matter what part I may play in the Guild in 2000 and hopefully beyond, I owe NLG a vast debt for the joy it has brought me thus far. Thank you all!

#

NLG BASH

Thursday, August 12

9:30 pm

Rosemont Convention Center

Room 13



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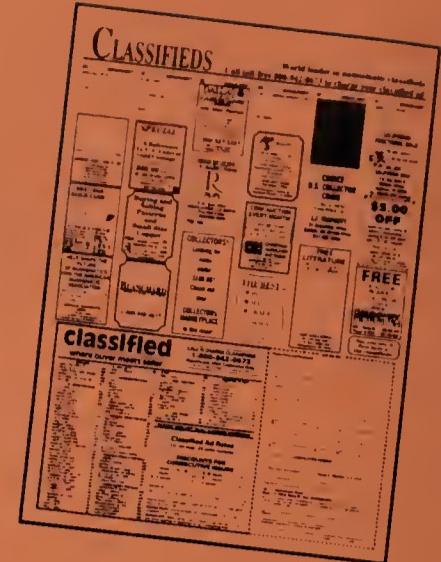
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